

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7977

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INFO CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

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COMUSMACTHAI

13TH AIR FORCE

13TH ADVON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17166

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJ: WEAPONS RANGES IN THAILAND

REF: A. BANGKOK 9718 AND PREVIOUS

B. STATE 126042 AND PREVIOUS

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED FOLLOWING MEMORANDUM FROM LTG KRIANGSAK,
ACTING CHIEF OF STAFF SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS
(FORWARD), ON 2 NOVEMBER APPROVING THE USE OF THE UDORN
EMERGENCY JETTISON AREA AS A TACTICAL WEAPONS RANGE (REFTELS).

QUOTE:

THE SUPREME COMMANDER HAS GRANTED HIS APPROVAL TO
USE THE UDORN JETTISON RANGE AS A TACTICAL RANGE ON
A TEMPORARY BASIS. HE FEELS THAT THE US SIDE SHOULD
TAKE STEPS TO LOCATE AND/OR CONSTRUCT A TACTICAL
WEAPONS RANGE SUITABLE FOR USE ON A PERMANENT BASIS.
THE SELECTION OF THE SITE FOR THE RANGE WILL BE
ACCOMPLISHED BY BOTH THE RTAF AND USAF WORKING TOGETHER.

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THE SUPREME COMMANDER'S APPROVAL STIPULATES THAT THE RTAF WILL SELECT THE DAYS AND TIMES IN WHICH THE TACTICAL WEAPONS RANGE MAY BE USED AS SUCH. THE US SIDE WILL BE INFORMED ACCORDINGLY. END QUOTE.

2. THE UDORN EMERGENCY JETTISON AREA APPROVED BY THE RTG IN JANUARY 1970 AND NOW APPROVED FOR USE AS A TACTICAL RANGE IS THE FOLLOWING AREA: 1702N 10240E; 1702N 10244E; 1709N 10240E; 1709N 10244E. REF B CONFIRMED THAT THIS AREA WAS SUITABLE FOR A TACTICAL WEAPONS RANGE, THUS OBVIATING NEED TO SEEK RTG APPROVAL FOR EXPANSION INVOLVING POSSIBLE LAND ACQUISITION AND POPULATION DISPLACEMENT PROBLEMS REPORTED REF A.

3. COMMENT: WE ARE AWARE THAT THE RTAF DID NOT FAVOR USE OF UDORN JETTISON AREA AS JOINT USE TACTICAL RANGE, EVEN THOUGH THEY ALSO HAVE REQUIREMENTS, ON THE BASIS THAT USAF WOULD ACQUIRE AND EXTENSIVELY IMPROVE AN AREA 15NM NE OF NAUZHONG WHICH WAS CONSIDERED JOINTLY FOR DEVELOPMENT AS A SCOREABLE RANGE IN 1968-70. THIS LONG-AWAITED APPROVAL WAS GIVEN PROMPTLY AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN WHICH DAWEI IS MOD AND ALSO ACTING AS SUPREME COMMANDER. WE BELIEVE THAT KRIANGSAK, AFTER MONTHS OF DELAY SEEKING A WAY AROUND RTAF OBJECTIONS, CHOSE THE OPPORTUNE TIME TO GAIN DAWEI'S APPROVAL. DAWEI, BY GRANTING "TEMPORARY" APPROVAL PENDING US ACTION TO LOCATE AND DEVELOP A PERMANENT RANGE, COMPROMISED WITH THE RTAF IN HIS USUAL ADROIT MANNER. IF "TEMPORARY" ARRANGEMENT OPERATES SMOOTHLY, WE DO NOT EXPECT RTG TO PRESS US TO DEVELOP PERMANENT RANGE. END COMMENT.

4. TO AVOID THE NECESSITY OF HAVING TO LOCATE AND DEVELOP ANOTHER TACTICAL WEAPONS AREA, REQUEST THAT COMUSMACVHAI COORDINATE PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF THE UDORN AREA WITH THE RTAF AND THAT ALL CONCERNED CAREFULLY AVOID ANY ACTION THAT COULD APPRECIATE RTAF OBJECTION TO CONTINUED USE.
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